

By Jane Taber

Citizen staff writer

Razor sharp blades are their forte'.

Between them they've sharpened 40,000 pairs of skates in the past four years. That's almost 400 blades a day—enough to drive anyone mad.

But Wayne Duquette and his partner Keith McCauley are used to it.

For the last four years they've run the skate sharpening booths on the Rideau Canal.

Saturday the two went for the world skate sharpening record, hoping to get their names into the Guinness Book of World Records.

"Since there hasn't been one set yet it won't be hard to beat," said Duquette, 27.

McCauley, 25, came up with the idea about a month ago.

"You're always hearing about bad news in the papers and on the radio. I just wanted to do something good for a change."

They worked for free Saturday donating their earnings to the Union Mission and Youth Services of Ottawa to buy two television sets.

But they were disappointed with the \$300 they collected.

McCauley sharpened about 160 pairs of skates, Duquette about 150.

"It's a little too frosty for people to be out today," said McCauley. "I could have done twice as many pairs."

Duquette had the same results.

"We didn't do as well as we expected. The weather was enough to ward off any evil spirits."

But the -26 temperature Saturday and Sunday's -20 didn't ward off Winterlude participants.

An estimated 25,000 people were out on the canal Sunday for the wrap-up of Ottawa's 10-day Winterlude festivities.

According to co-ordinator, Rheel Leroux, more than 200,000 people participated in the events.

Winterlude cost between \$150,000 to \$180,000. The National Capital Commission contributed \$25,000 and the rest came from private organizations, including \$30,000 from the Canadian Trotting Association.

Leroux said he's glad to see the activities come to an end but is pleased with the results of Ottawa's first Winterlude.

"I'm happy but I'm not satisfied," he said. "There's so much more we can do to improve. We're far from having something as major as the Quebec Winter Carnival but we've shown it's possible to have this

type of event in the nation's capital."

He admitted he worried about a week before it began that the event would be a flop.

"I won't tell you the feeling I had during those six days of rain. I was scared."

Although Leroux was pleased with the success of the harness racing a week ago, the ice sculpture contest and the various races, he said there were a few things he was disappointed with.

"We need much bigger official ceremonies. The torch parade will have to be revised and most certainly crowd control at the horse races. Lots of improvements have to be made."

A complete evaluation of the activities will be looked at before it's determined whether to hold Winterlude II, said Leroux.

"But I think we already have the answer."

He said already he's been approached by a local hotel wishing to sponsor a Winterlude Ball next year and has some new ideas for additional events.

"I'd like to see a big parade at night on

the canal with about 50 floats. This is a government town so why not have government officials participate by making sculptures representing the different departments."

Leroux said he'd also like to see cross-country skiing along the sides of the canal, more toboggan slides and more events involving family participation.

"But first we have to learn that Winterlude is not a festival or a carnival. It's something unique just for us. This year we had to explain what Winterlude is. Eventually the word can disappear."

While Leroux and his 42 staff members packed it in for the year, McCauley and Duquette still have at least two more weeks before they call it quits.

McCauley said he doesn't mind his two-month stint on the canal.

"I'd much rather work in the winter than in the summer. I like my two months off in the summer."

While this winter hasn't been too good for business because of the rain and then the cold weather, Duquette said his earnings have increased every year. Last year he said he made about \$2,500.



— Citizen photo

Keith McCauley at his sharpening stand under Bronson Bridge